(b) if so, the action taken by it in this regard during the last one year; and

(c) the other steps taken to promote investment and trade flows?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of External Affairs has been involved in promoting foreign investments into India particularly through our Missions abroad. It recognizes that huge investments are required in infrastructure and core sectors and as such along with the other relevant Ministries Places focus on encouraging investments in these sectors.

(b) Wooing and encouraging foreign investors to invest India is an ongoing effort, the quantification of which over a sengmented period may not be feasible. The Ministry's efforts involve publicity, seminars, shows, discussions with business leaders abroad and providing guidance and information to foreign investors at various stages. It also facilitates contacts with apex Chambers and joint venture partners. Our Missions play a major role in this.

(c) Steps to promote investment and trade are in the nature of dissemination of information on India's economic policies and the liberalized economic environment conducive for foreign investments and trade. The steps include distribution of publicity literature, guidance and support to visiting delegations to and from India, facilitating business contracts and providing trade and investment related information and assisting the efforts of our state Governments through our Missions abroad. The Ministry also assists the efforts of the Chambers of Commerce and gives a diplomatic support to the work of other concerned Ministries.

Pakistani Gesture on Easing of Visa Rules by India

175. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistani has taken any reciprocal steps to India's gesture easing visa rules for Pakistani visitors to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) and (b) While Pakistan has in bilateral discussions indicated that it favours easing its visa regime for Indian nationals, Government are not aware of any steps taken by Pakistan in this regard.

Denial of Chinese Visa to Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister

176. SHRI S. MATHU MANI:
SHRI O.P. KOHLI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi denied visa to the Chief Minister of Arunchal Pradesh stating that persons from Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim can go to China without a visa and that China does not recognise the passports issued by the Government of India to the people in Arunchal Pradesh and Sikkim as that country considers these two Indian States to be part of China and refuses to recognize Indian sovereignty over these two Indian States; and

(b) whether Government took a note on the above, as reported in the press on the 29th June, 1997; if so, whether Government lodged complaint with the Chinese authorities in New Delhi. If so, what was the reaction of the Chinese authorities in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Curbing Anti-India Activities from Nepali Soil

177. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister was assured that Nepal would not permit any anti-India or terrorist activities from its soil;

(b) whether the question of curbing and preventing anti-India activities from Nepali soil was discussed during his, recent visit to Nepal;

(c) if so, in what precise context the question was considered and what was the outcome thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Napali Government so far in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (d) During the Prime Minister's visit to Nepal the determination of the two countries was reiterated to work closely and fight the scourage of terrorism. The Prime Minister directed their Home Secretaries to meet at the earliest to develop and understanding in this regard. They also renewed their commitment not to allow their territory to be used for activities directed against or prejudicial to the security of the other. They also desired that the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Border management be held at the earliest.

Bangladesh-India-Sri-Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation Pact

178. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Banladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic cooperation pact has been signed recently between the four countries, with a view to synergise their resources and technical strenghth;

(b) if so, whether a number of joint initiatives and ventures, including a joint airline to cater to the religious tourism circuit in the four participating countries, are contemplated under the pact; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance of the pact?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI):

(a) to (c) Yes Sir, The main purpose of this subregional grouping involving Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand which was formally launched at the Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok on June 6, 1997, is to identify and synergise cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, industry, technology, human resource development, tourism, agriculture, energy, infrastructure and transportation. Specific projects in the identified areas of cooperation will be developed based on studies to be conducted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and pacific (ESCAP) and concepts developed by Member States themselves. Futher steps will be taken after the proposed study by ESCAP has been received. The idea of a joint airline to cater to tourism pilgrimage circuits was put forward by Thailand and is to be studies further at experts level after the Thai concept paper is received.

Staff Strength of Diplomatic Missions in the Erstwhile Soviet Union

179. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the current staff strength of our diplomatic missions based in different locations of the erstwhile Soviet Union;

(b) the broad areas of responsibility assigned to them; and

(c) whether any fresh mutual treaties of frindship are contemplated to be signed with these countries;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) At Present, India has eight Embassies and three Consulates General in different locations in the erstwhile Soviet Union. The total approved strength of all these Embassies and Consulates covered under the latest sanction of the Ministry of